

THE GOSPEL of

MARK

*The Kingdom of  
God*

## Secrets of the Kingdom

### The Context:

- 3 parables 3 common elements: seed, growth and harvest/yield (to be seen as 1 discourse)
- Private conversation with disciples in middle
- Content of Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom so far:
  1. The kingdom begins via spreading of gospel
  2. There is opposition: the Devil, the flesh, and the world
  3. There are 2 kinds of hearts: receptive and unreceptive – the parable of the sower confronts the climate of unbelief in the people



# THE GOSPEL of **MARK**

Mark  
4:21-34

<sup>21</sup> He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand? <sup>22</sup> For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. <sup>23</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.”

<sup>24</sup> “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. <sup>25</sup> Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

## Lessons from the Lamp

- Jesus reinforces teaching about receptive hearts and unreceptive hearts
  - The light of world has come and is revealing what was previously hidden (kingdom secrets)
    - John 1:1-14
  - Calling disciples to open their ears (pay attention!)
  - The measure you use – the receptive heart never stops hearing, and consequently, never stops discovering and never stops being blessed
  - The warning is reinforced to the unreceptive heart: even what you have will be taken from you



# THE GOSPEL of **MARK**

Mark  
4:21-34

<sup>26</sup> He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup> Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

<sup>28</sup> All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. <sup>29</sup> As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

## Parable of the Growing Seed

### The Problem:

*\*Belief that growth is the product of human effort*

- Jesus wants the hearer to make no mistake about how the seed (gospel) grows and bears fruit

### The Warning:

*\*Your own efforts will never produce the fruit a receptive heart produces*



## Parable of the Growing Seed

### The Problem:

*\*Belief that growth is the product of human effort*

### The Kingdom Secrets:

1. Growth is the result of God's on-going work
  - Both individually in the believer (sanctification) and collectively in the church
  - The mysteriousness of the seed growing without the farmer's help is meant to emphasize the role God plays in the seed (gospel) growing and maturing – the Kingdom grows even when the farmer sleeps!
  - 1 Cor 3:5-9

## Parable of the Growing Seed

### The Problem:

*\*Belief that growth is the product of human effort*

### The Kingdom Secrets:

1. Growth is the result of God's on-going work
2. God partners with us for the kingdom growth
  - The farmer moves into action when the harvest is ready
  - God uses his people to help with harvest – people becoming believers
  - God has done the work; we get to play a part in seeing people come into the light!
  - “Harvest” and “sickle” imagery from Joel 3:13 for “The Day of the LORD”



# THE GOSPEL of **MARK**

Mark  
4:21-34

<sup>30</sup> Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. <sup>32</sup> Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

<sup>33</sup> With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. <sup>34</sup> He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

## Parable of the Mustard Seed

### The Problem:

*\*People are drawn to the attractive & extraordinary*

- The common belief was that the Messiah would be an impressive figure who crushed the oppressors of God's people
- The people were waiting for a politically motivated Messiah

### The Warning:

*\*The unreceptive heart will not perceive the coming of the kingdom*



## Parable of the Mustard Seed

### The Kingdom Secrets:

1. It's easy to miss what God is doing when we expect human things
  - The small start is meant to show that the ways of the kingdom seem small and insignificant but end up beyond anything we could imagine (i.e. Jesus!)
  - We like the crowds; Jesus chooses a few
  - We gravitate towards the spectacular and impressive; God uses the weak and unlikely to fulfill his purposes
  - We want significance and impact; God wants faithful obedience flowing from a receptive heart
  - Don't overlook the small stuff that can have big impact in people's lives

## Parable of the Mustard Seed

### The Kingdom Secrets:

1. It's easy to miss what God is doing when we expect human things
2. The kingdom of God changes the environment where it takes root
  - When the kingdom grows, it blesses the environment that surrounds it
  - When God transforms you, it affects all those around you
  - When God transforms a church, it affects the community around it



## Parables of Seeds, Growth & Harvest

### The Mirror of the Parable:

1. Dedicate yourself to discovering, demonstrating and duplicating
2. God's work in the receptive heart is continual
  - It is not by your effort that you will grow
  - Obedience does not cause growth; rather a receptive heart responds to God in obedience and God makes that person grow

## Parables of Seeds, Growth & Harvest

### The Mirror of the Parable:

1. Dedicate yourself to discovering, demonstrating and duplicating
2. God's work in the receptive heart is continual
3. Be faithful with the small stuff. You do not know how God can use it
  - Small blessings can make a big impact
  - Commit yourself to faithful obedience flowing from receptive heart